

CHICAGO – Today, while President Barack Obama traveled through Poland, U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (IL-05) applauded the President's strong support of his bill to ease restrictions for Polish citizens wanting to travel to the United States. Earlier today, President Obama endorsed legislation introduced by Rep. Quigley to reform how countries qualify for the visa waiver program to ensure that strong allies like Poland are included. This legislation requires that aspirants to the visa waiver program commit to enhanced counter-terrorism cooperation with the United States.

"I have been working since the day I took office for Poland's inclusion in the Visa Waiver Program, because it's essential for our diplomacy, our economy, and our national security. I applaud President Obama on his strong commitment to right this wrong, and bring equity to a system that is uniquely unfair to Poland and Polish-Americans. On my trip to Poland last year, I saw firsthand their commitment to democracy and importance as our ally. I have been working tirelessly with the Embassy, the White House, my colleagues, and many local advocates here in Chicago to make this a reality, and I'm thrilled to share this tremendous news of the President's support with my Polish constituents, who have been waiting for this day for years."

Poland is currently one of the few European nations to be excluded from the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), despite its nearly century-long diplomatic relationship with the United States. The Polish government repealed its visa requirements for U.S. citizens traveling to Poland in 1991.

Since being elected to office in 2009, Quigley has been [an outspoken advocate](#) of including Poland in the VWP. As one of

[his first acts in Congress](#)

, Quigley called on President Obama personally to include Poland in the VWP, citing that the move has gained wide-spread, bipartisan support in prior Congresses.

Just last week, [Quigley and Senator Mark Kirk \(R-Ill.\) met with Poland's Ambassador Robert Kupiecki](#) to discuss the US-Poland partnership, including advancing the [new bicameral, bipartisan legislation](#) (H.R. 959) to include Poland in the VWP.

Last summer, [Quigley traveled to Poland](#) and attended a conference in Krakow

commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Community of Democracies. While there, he also paid his respects at the grave of former President Lech Kaczynski, and [delivered a resolution](#) on behalf of then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the entire House of Representatives expressing condolences for his passing in a tragic plane crash earlier that year.

Quigley represents over 110,000 Polish-American constituents. Illinois' 5th congressional district is home to one of the largest populations of Poles in the United States.

Read a copy of the letter from President Obama [HERE](#) .

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LINKS:

Introduction of H.R. 959 with Sen. Kirk and Rep. Lipinski– March 2011:

http://quigley.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=444:kirkquigleylipinski-push-for-polands-inclusion-in-visa-waiver-program&catid=19:2011-press-releases

Quigley's first call to President Obama in May 2009:

http://quigley.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=53:rep-quigley-calls-for-president-obama-to-include-poland-in-visa-waiver-program&catid=7:press-releases

Quigley introduces legislation to include Poland in VWP:

http://quigley.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=72:rep-quigley-introduces-bill-to-extend-visa-waiver-program&catid=7:press-releases

Quigley travels to Poland:

http://quigley.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=342:quigley-travels-to-poland-to-celebrate-democracy&catid=18:2010-press-releases

Quigley and Kirk meet with Polish Ambassador: http://quigley.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=488:quigley-kirk-polish-ambassador-meet-to-discuss-us-polish-relations-visa-waiver-program-&catid=19:2011-press-releases